Tells the Facts and Names the Names

$2.50

CounterPunch

June 1-15, 2005 *Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair* VOL. 12, NO. 11

JURIES AND LYNCH MOBS

BY ALEXANDER COCKBURN

The not-guilty verdict for Michael Jackson shows once again what can happen when the prosecution and defense are on at least an equal footing. Jackson had a top-flight lawyer with an unlimited budget. The prosecutors did what most prosecutors do in America: pile up the charges, on the calculation that the defendant will plead out.

In criminal cases the over-charging is accompanied by the allegations of jailhouse snitches and by lies on the witness stand from cops.

The defendants have either no budget at all or only modest resources. They can't afford expert witnesses, or private investigators to pick the prosecution's case apart.

When a defendant can afford a good lawyer, top-flight investigators, expert witnesses and kindred firepower, very often the prosecution's case simply falls apart, starting with sloppy handling of evidence, compromised forensic work and contradictory testimony from the police.

In Jackson's case the piling up of the charges led the prosecutors into the "conspiracy" disaster. They had to put the mother of the boy with cancer on the stand, and her testimony blew up in their face.

The twelve did exactly what jurors should do and offered a magnificent example of the abiding importance of the jury as the fundamental bulwark of freedom in this Republic.

Their bottom line was simple: the prosecution had simply failed to make its case beyond a reasonable doubt. Such outrageous prosecutorial strategies, okayed by the judge, as allowing the jury to hear previous allegations (many of them not even first hand ac-

(**Juries** *continued on page 2)*

How U.S. Anthropologists Planned "Race-Specific" Weapons Against the Japanese

BY DAVID PRICE

During the Second World War, over two dozen anthropologists worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the institutional predecessor to the CIA, performing a variety of tasks ranging from covert-ops to desk-bound propaganda analysis. I will now describe one 1943 OSS document, the "Preliminary Report on Japanese Anthropology", which reveals that U.S. anthropologists were recommending culture- and race-specific means of killing Japanese soldiers and civilians. This report sought to determine if there were "physical characteristics in which the Japanese differ from others in such a way as to make these differences significant from the point of view of carrying on the war". The person who wrote this report remains classified, but a list of scholars consulted by OSS includes anthropologists such as Clyde Kluckhohn, Fred Hulse, Duncan Strong, Ernest Hooton, C. M. Davenport, Wesley Dupertuis, and Morris Steggerda.

The report considered a series of Japanese physical and cultural characteristics to determine if weapons could be designed to exploit any identifiable unique "racial" features. It examined Japanese anatomical and structural features, Japanese physiological traits, Japanese susceptibility to diseases, and possible weaknesses in Japanese physiology, or "nutritional weaknesses". The OSS instructed the anthropologists and other advisors to try to conceive ways that any detectable differences could be used in the development of weapons, but they were cautioned to consider this issue "in a-moral and non-ethical terms," with an understanding that, "if any of the suggestions contained herein are considered for action, all moral and ethical implications will be carefully studied." Prefiguring the findings of Stanley Milgram's later "shocking" obedience experiments, most of the anthropologists consulted abandoned their moral authority and complied with the OSS' request.

Two anthropologists, Ralph Linton and Harry Shapiro, objected to even considering the OSS' request – but they were the exceptions. One Harvard anthropologist, Ernest A. Hooton, recommended that the OSS undertake a "constitutional study of Japanese prisoners or of native-born males of military age in the relocation centers, [to] yield useful information regarding the weak spots of Japanese physique." Another Harvard anthropologist, Carl Seltzer, recommended that physiologists, hygienists, anthropologists, psychologists or sociologists examine Japanese "specimens" to find desired weaknesses.

Hooton and Seltzer's views aligned with Harvard's racial anthropology in this period. Months before this report, anthropologist Melville Jacobs wrote to Margaret Mead complaining, apropos his difficulties in joining the war effort (likely because of his Communist past) that "the thought that members of the Hooton-Harvard bunch, with their racist slantings, should get in on any army or governmental services that may be already or might in the future be set up to do a job with a

(**Price** *continued on page 3)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(**Juries** *continued from page 1*)
counts) against Jackson – on which he'd not been convicted – had cut no ice with these jurors.

It was a great day for the jury and a gratifying blow against the lynch mob, including outfits such as CNN which averted their gaze from photographs of abuse at Abu Ghraib, while stigmatizing Jackson as the supreme abuser.

Contrast this process in Santa Barbara County to the disgraceful trial and conviction of Father Paul Shanley who was convicted in Massachusetts earlier this year.

The 74-year Shanley drew a 12 to 15 year prison sentence on the uncorroborated testimony of one man's "recovered memories" of abuse at the hands of Shanley many years before. These days "recovered memory" has been thoroughly discredited. The judge should have thrown the case out. But, shamefully, the judge flinched before the hysteria. The prosecutors must have known how lucky they were. Aware of the weakness of their case, last year they'd offered Shanley two years' house arrest. He refused the deal, insisting he was innocent.

A slightly longer review by the editors of the Jackson can be found on our website at: counterpunch.org/cockburn06152005.html

Editors
Alexander Cockburn
Jeffrey St. Clair

Business
Becky Grant

Design
Deborah Thomas

Counselor
Ben Sonnenberg

Published twice monthly except August, 22 issues a year:
$40 individuals,
$100 institutions/supporters
$30 student/low-income
CounterPunch.
All rights reserved.
CounterPunch
PO Box 228
Petrolia, CA 95558
1-800-840-3683 (phone)
counterpunch@counterpunch.org
www.counterpunch.org

A History of Halliburton, Part 2

By Jeffrey St Clair

Part One, in our last issue, traced the triune rise of Brown & Root and Halliburton (later to become one company) and Lyndon Johnson. They gave him money. He got them contracts. For Johnson, money was the route to political power. From his early days running the Texas branch of FDR's National Youth Administration, LBJ had set his eyes on landing a seat in the US senate. LBJ got the NYA position, at the age of 29, through the intervention of Alvin Wirtz, the lead attorney for Brown & Root and a noted fixer. As for LBJ, he later said that Wirtz was "like a daddy to me". Brown & Root harbored similar ambitions for their man. They owned a few congressmen, but an obedient senator was the key to a higher order of riches.

LBJ's first shot at the senate came in 1941, after Texas Senator Morris Sheppard keeled over from a brain hemorrhage. Running as a New Dealer and fueled by cash from Herman Brown, Johnson embarked on a fabulously corrupt campaign against the populist governor of Texas, W. Lee "Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" O'Daniel, a flour magnate and the state's most popular radio personality. He ran on an anti-union and anti-FDR platform that appealed to rural Texas voters.

Ballot boxes were bought by both campaigns. Johnson bought them in San Antonio and southern Texas, while O'Daniel, called the greatest campaigner in Texas history, purchased them throughout east Texas. With 97 per cent of the votes counted, Johnson led the race and seemed assured of victory. Then more ballots mysteriously materialized, and O'Daniel claimed victory by 1,311 votes. The final fix may have been made by a cabal of Texas oil men and ranchers who wanted O'Daniel out of Austin. They figured he could do them less damage in DC.

Johnson vowed to learn the lessons of his defeat. He shed much of his New Dealer image and reemerged as a Southern populist, touting his votes against an anti-lynching bill, against Truman's bill to outlaw the poll tax, and for the union-busting Taft-Hartley Act. He also courted cash from every corporation and mogul he could find, promising to return their investment tenfold.

When he ran again in 1948, Johnson almost certainly lost the vote, but stole the election, abetted by Brown & Root, the company's lawyer Alvin Wirtz, and newspaper tycoon Charles Marsh.

Once again, Johnson faced a popular and reactionary governor for the Texas senate seat, vacated when Pappy O'Daniel (grew bored of living in DC. This time his opponent was Coke Stevenson, rancher, bigot and anti-communist. In the Democratic primary, Stevenson steamrollered Johnson by more than 70,000 votes; yet in a crowded field, the governor didn't top 50 per cent, forcing a run-off election in the fall. It would become the most expensive political campaign waged in Texas until George W. Bush, underwritten by the descendents of LBJ's backers, defeated Anne Richards in the fierce 1994 gubernatorial campaign.

Stevenson was a wildly popular figure in Texas, but LBJ had an equalizer: a nearly bottomless reservoir of campaign money provided by Brown & Root and Wirtz's client list of oil barons, including H.L. Hunt and Sid Richardson. LBJ also enjoyed free access to a DC3, courtesy of Brown & Root, which would rush him across the vast Texan plains for as many as 10 appearances in a single day.

Fifty-two years later, Halliburton offered its corporate jets for use by George Bush and his campaign team during the 2000 campaign and subsequent tumultuous Florida recount. For those flights, the Bush campaign reimbursed Halliburton only the cost of one first class ticket.

In 1948 it was also this same DC-3 that made emergency flights to Austin and Dallas in search of cash from the accounts of Brown & Root. The money was delivered in $100 bills stuffed into grocery bags. The bagman was none other than John Connolly, the future governor of Texas and Halliburton board member. Each haul would net between $40,000and $50,000 for the Johnson campaign.

Johnson also prevailed upon the Bell Helicopter Company, which would soon relocate to Texas, to loan him a chopper for his campaign. One of the first politicians to use the newfangled machine, Johnson would descend upon his campaign venues with the "Yellow Rose of Texas" blaring from loudspeakers attached to the landing gear – a prelude for the Wagner-screaming choppers in *Apocalypse Now.*

All of this got LBJ close, but quite not

(**Halliburton** *continued on page 6)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(**Price** *continued from page 1)*
racial bearing gives me the itch.".

Medical data on the fundamental physical differences in the Japanese "race" were reviewed, and differences in inner ears morphologies, taste bud densities, laryngeal musculatures, intestinal lengths, and arterial systems were evaluated. But no "useful" morphological differences were isolated, and the recommendations proffered were of the run of the mill indiscriminate-extermination variety, advocating the use of "anthrax bacilli which attacks the respiratory tract, a known weak spot in the Japanese body, [as] the most effective agent." One Harvard Medical School professor was urged by OSS to:

"'think aloud' on the possibility of introducing some disease among enemy troops that might catch them by surprise, but against which our own troops were well protected. Most ailments caused by flukes or protozoans he dismissed as impractical; plague virus he thought could be introduced by dropping infected mice or rats, possibly by parachute; typhus might be spread by the device of having louse-covered but immune volunteers submit to capture; and ticks infected with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever might be released among our opponents, but this would scarcely be effective since the disease is not transmitted from man to man by contagion. The professor then launched into a spontaneous discussion of anthrax, whose introduction he regarded as entirely practical and highly effective, despite the fact that anthrax, too, is not contagious. …Furthermore, it is possible to raise highly virulent strains of *Bacillus anthracis* and to spread them widely throughout any enemy concentration, as the spores of the bacillus are virtually indestructible and could even be distributed in bombs. In addition, the effects of anthrax are very rapid and dangerous since the bacilli enter into cuts, or abrasions, prevent wounds from healing, and induce pneumonia."

The report conceded that one downside of unleashing anthrax on Japanese populations was that it could easily spread to livestock populations, and thus entire regions would "remain dangerous for many years." The threat of such an uncontrolled spread of anthrax led the OSS to caution against using anthrax weapons. (I should add that such concerns did not stop Japan's Manchukup Unit 731 from having already developed and used anthrax and other bio-weapons against the Chinese and Russians on the Mongolian-Manchurian border and in Central China.)

In examining the potential of a general collapse of dietary and hygienic stability on the Japanese homefront, the OSS reported "the bulk of the Japanese population lives on the ragged edge of dietary deficiency." It was, therefore, recommended that "the susceptibility of Japanese men of military age, especially under the strain of active warfare, to [beriberi] should be exploited to the full." Even more deaths by malnutrition could be inflicted by making "a continuing and concerted effort to sink every enemy fishing boat that is sighted."

Finally, the OSS report contemplated destruction of the Japanese rice supply, observing that next to eliminating access to fish:

"equally important would be a planned attack on our opponent's rice supplies. Since stored rice tends to lose much of its Vitamin B the Japanese cannot readily build up large reserves, so that our energies should be directed towards the object of destroying growing crops that are about to mature. Furthermore, it would be more rewarding if rice fields in Japan proper were attacked whenever possible as this would force the enemy to rely more and more on imported rice, thus adding materially to his increasing shipping problems.

"Several procedures for interfering with rice production may be suggested. Concentrations of rice fields might be subjected to bombing, particularly with missiles that spread laterally and tear up a good deal of ground; irrigating devices should be consistently destroyed; the acid concentration best suited to growing rice plants should be chemically upset whenever possible; and the introduction of rice-destroying diseases should be seriously considered."

The report recommended consideration of a species of fungi, *Sclerotium oryzae*, which had attacked Japanese rice varieties in the early years of the twentieth century, because "the advisability of systematically destroying the enemy's rice plants, as well as his fish supplies, can scarcely be questioned".

The report's conclusions identified "no significant structural, physiological, or constitutional variations on the part of the Japanese as compared with other races. Attempts to exploit such minor differences as do exist are almost certain to prove futile."

We are left to wonder what recommendations would have been made if *significant* characteristics had been isolated. If the OSS had access to the Human Genome Project's dataset, it would certainly have been analyzed to see if any genetic anomalies could be exploited in Japanese populations. And the CIA today?

Americans were not the only anthropologists drawn into such decisions during the war. New scholarship by Gretchen Schafft documents how German anthropologists informed Hitler's views of race and carried out Nazi atrocities, and Nakao Katsumi and other Japanese scholars are now documenting how Japanese anthropology assisted in the brutal military campaigns of the Pacific War.

Recommendations proffered were of the run-of-the-mill indiscriminate-extermination variety, advocating the use of "anthrax bacilli, which attacks the respiratory tract, a known weak spot in the Japanese body, [as] the most effective agent".

To some, OSS anthropologists' studies, without implementation, of race-specific weapons is insignificant in comparison to Joseph Mengele's applications of his anthropological training while others may find it incongruous to fuss about contemplated-but-not-used bio-weapons against a civilian enemy that was firebombed and atomized. All the same, these anthropologists' willing compliance with the dark desires of the OSS left American anthropology positioned but one fianchetto removed from complicity in genocide. CP

David Price is the author of *Threatening Anthropology*. His next book is entitled: *Weaponizing Anthropology: American Anthropology and the Second World War*. As his last paragraph attests, he loves the word fianchetto. It means "small step". He can be reached at: dprice@stmartin.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What's So Neo about the Neo-Cons?

By Gabriel Kolko

The role of the neo-conservatives in the Bush Administration's ranks – Paul D. Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense until spring 2005, Douglas Feith, Pentagon undersecretary for policy until mid-2005, and Richard Perle of the Defense Policy Board are the best known of many – deserves careful assessment, if only to set an essential context for the U.S.A.'s actions after George W. Bush became the American president in January 2001.

The neo-cons have been influential about where to apply power, but most of the frustrations that America experienced and errors it committed after Bush came to office were due to the basic assumptions that he shared with his predecessors. Had the neo-cons not existed the policy would have been essentially the same, although the arguments in its favor would have been different and perhaps less grandiose.

Like other ambitious nations before it, the U.S. has been endemically unable, since at least 1947, to formulate and implement a coherent, rational foreign and military policy based on priorities and objectives that were fairly realistic. But the very absence of a sense of the limits of its power, and the conviction that it has a global mission, has kept the U.S. ensnared, over the face of the earth.

After 1979, Washington considered it in its vital interests to keep Iran from dominating the Gulf region. To maintain a balance , America encouraged and supported Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s. By destroying a united Iraq under Hussein, as the neo-cons urged, the U.S. removed the main barrier to Iran's eventual triumph.

Had the U.S. done nothing in the Gulf across the past half-century, it would be far better off in terms of both power and influence in the region. srael – erroneously, in my opinion – thought it to its interest to see Hussein destroyed, but geo-politically the Iraq war was a disaster for the U.S. Ironically, it was also far less dangerous than other interventions it might have taken elsewhere.

Still, the neo-cons have been a crucial even if not a decisive factor since Bush came to power. Ideologically, there is no originality in neo-cons' ideas and the more abstract notions they advocate on the national purpose and uses of power are quite traditional. The contention that a nation has power, at least in military terms, and should use it in the belief that things will fall into place politically, has been asserted in various ways by many countries for over a century, but this same contention sounds more elegant when it comes from the mouths of intellectuals than from Wyoming or Texas politicians and fixers. There have always been foreign-policy Establishments in the U.S. and elsewhere, singular or plural; the neo-cons are merely one more retread of an old model.

Ideologically, there is no originality in neo-cons' ideas and the more abstract notions they advocate on the national purpose and uses of power are quite traditional.

Neo-con persistence and influence were never based on their intellectual originality or cogency but on the fact they were a mafia, close friends and social soulmates for decades. They were overwhelmingly Jewish, many had been some variety of socialist or Trotskyist affiliation in their younger years, and they stuck together personally and watched each other's career trajectories.

Tight friendships and even intermarriages strengthened common experiences and ideas. These people have many of the attributes of a family and cult. They are largely academics and intellectuals with no military experience whatsoever. They think deductively and put ideology before reality; they are oblivious to history altogether. They were viscerally pro-Israel out of ethnic preference; an attitude that is reinforced by numerous personal ties, and even as the Israelis have gotten themselves in deeper troubles because of their bellicose policies, the neo-cons have always supported them uncritically.

The plan of attacking Iraq, and perhaps other states in the Middle East with a view to somehow creating a more congenial environment for Israel in the region, was at the top of their agenda by the mid-1990s, but some of them were also aware of growing Chinese power and eager to confront it.)The Bush Administration's return to the theme of the alleged China menace at the beginning of 2005 picked up the logic of the neo-cons' earlier bellicosity regarding Chins. But the U.S. was pro-Israel three or more decades before the neo-cons had any influence whatsoever over policy. It is historically more accurate to stress the foreign policy consensus between Republicans and Democrats than assume there is something qualitatively different in the Bush Administration's designs. There is not.

The neo-cons surely played a key role in the decision to make war on Iraq, something Israel eagerly wanted (and in which objective its intelligence services played a crucial and misleading role), but whether they were by themselves decisive remains highly unlikely. There were many individuals who were at least as belligerent, Democrats as well as Republicans, over the preceding half-century.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The problem, in brief, is not personalities but policy, and to focus on the neo-cons as if they are unique or distinctively causal is highly misleading. That the neo-cons think Israel's interests are of transcendent importance in the Middle East is a fact, but by itself it does not explain American policy in that region, which became dangerous much earlier.

The Bush Administration would have been bellicose regardless of the region of the world but that the fact that it *was* the Middle East and that the White House talked about recasting the balance of forces and ideology in that region was very important. The Pentagon surely promoted Ahmad Chalabi because he adroitly cultivated the pro-Israel lobby in the U.S.A. and promised to accept and recognize Israel.

Their influence, like all such groups in the past, was due to far more powerful men who were neither Jewish nor intellectuals, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice-president Dick Cheney, who found the neo-cons' visceral impulses and their skills useful. Cheney and Rumsfeld, and the eclectic hawks in Bush's administration, were oblivious to the consequences of their recommendations or to the way they shocked America's overseas friends.

They believe in an apocalyptic world. Most of the President's key advisers, not just the Jewish or intellectual neo-cons, possess aggressive, geopolitical visions that take for granted the ability of American military and economic power to attain these goals. Eccentric interpretations of the Holy Scriptures – which a number of presidents have also shared – inspire yet others, including Bush himself.

The U.S. government's proclamation that it wishes to alter the influence of Islamic fundamentalism, and to convert Muslims to secularism, only confirms that it is utterly confused ideologically. Some are born-again Christians who believe the U.S. has a divine mission to reorder the world.)

Most of these crusaders employ an amorphous nationalist and messianic rhetoric that makes it impossible to predict exactly how Bush will mediate between very diverse, often quirky influences, though he is partial to advocates of the wanton use of American military might throughout the world.

No one close to the President acknowledges the decisive limits of its powers – limits that are political, economic and, as Korea and Vietnam proved, military too. Ultimately, the Bush Administration shares its predecessors' myopia, but the neo-cons gave an intellectually elegant spin to it.

But whether the ideas were based in muscular impulses of national might and mission or more elegant rationalizations such as intellectuals are wont to prefer, it was the same functional policy.

The neo-cons are much more a reflection of the triumph of dangerous men and ideas rather than a cause of foreign policies that are oblivious to the limits of power.

They are more easily identified and are, therefore, much more visible, but Bush, Vice-president Dick Cheney, and Rumsfeld came to power determined to pursue a very muscular foreign policy, "robust" and "forward-leaning" as they describe it, with China on the list of three highest priority problems.

The neo-cons simply exploited the opportunity that 9/11 created to redirect the focus to an aggressive foreign policy in a way that was compatible with Israel's interests in the Middle East. But correlation is not causation, and that this mafia was in the right places and the right time is not, ultimately, the source of the crisis.

They are hawks in the largest sense, ideologically as well as specifically, just as they are aggressive on on Asian as well as Middle Eastern questionsand that is why they got their jobs. The fact most are Jewish and many support Sharon's Likud party specifically is relevant but not necessarily causal.

In the final analysis, all of the analytical and more practical problems that America now has can be traced back a half-century or so, through Democratic and Republican administrations, and long before the seeming triumph of the neo-cons; this is certainly the case with breaking alliances.

The inspirational notion of America as a "city on the hill" is centuries old, and it was the devout Calvinist professor, President Woodrow Wilson, who articulated over 80 years ago the idea of America transforming global politics, including the economic and political foundations of nation states.

Comparable groups, with elegant philosophies on the efficacy of military power, have existed in other nations.

Much the same can be said for the Christian evangelicals and fundamentalists, although most of them – with notable exceptions – lack the aptitudes and skills required for high policymaking offices. They have constituencies far larger than the Jewish neo-cons and are powerful because of their voting strength, but they are neither causal nor original in the ways and purposes of foreign policy.

Quirky justifications and advocates notwithstanding, there is a long historic continuity in thinking that far transcends these bizarre eccentrics. Religion has been very strong in American life and politics for well over a century. There was prohibition of alcoholic drinks in the U.S.A., largely for religious reasons, for well over a decade after the First World War. America's problems and responses are quite predictable, and the second President Bush is no exception.

In the final analysis, there is nothing original in his actions anywhere in the world, and no one should blame neo-cons or evangelicals for any of them. They are as American as apple pie. CP

Gabriel Kolko is the author of *Another Century of War.*

SUBSCRIPTION INFO

Enter/Renew Subscription here:

One year $40 Two yrs $70
($35 email only / $45 email/print)
One year institution/supporters $100
One year student/low income, $30
T-shirts, $17
Please send back issue(s)
_____ ($5/issue)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

_____

Payment must accompany order, or dial 1-800-840-3683 and renew by credit card. Add $12.50 for Canadian and $17.50 for foreign subscriptions. If you want Counter-Punch emailed to you please supply your email address. Make checks payable to: **CounterPunch**
Business Office
PO Box 228, Petrolia, CA 95558

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(**Halliburton** *continued from page 2)*

close enough, to assure him of an outright victory. The 1948 election needed to be both bought and stolen.

As the polls closed in the Texas senate race of 1948, the margin was razor thin, with Coke Stevenson running slightly ahead of LBJ. Over the next few days, precincts across the vast state counted and recounted their votes. Five days after the election, an amended return came in from Jim Wells County in the southern outback of Texas. It seems that a certain Luis Salas, following the suggestion of a Brown & Root lawyer, began scouring the courthouse for a missing box of ballots. He chanced upon the infamous Box 13 from the hamlet of Alice, Texas, which contained 220 votes, all for Johnson, which was enough to push LBJ into the lead by 87 votes. (A later analysis by Johnson biographer Robert Caro showed that 220 names had been added to the voters' list after the polls had closed.)

Stevenson rushed to the courts for relief. He won round one. He got a state judge in Texas to place an injunction against the ballots from Alice. Again, the race was ultimately decided by the U.S. Supreme Court by the intervention of a single justice, Hugo Black. Black was a New Dealer elevated to the high bench by FDR. With time running out, LBJ's lawyers Abe Fortas (whom LBJ ultimately rewarded by putting him on the Supreme Court) and Alvin Wirtz, who was also Brown & Root's lead corporate counsel, arranged a secret meeting with Black in his chambers at the Supreme Court. At this *ex parte* conclave, Wirtz impressed upon Black the importance of LBJ's election to the senate, saying that many New Deal programs (he presunmably did not mention the gross topic of Pentagon contracts) hinged on the outcome.

On September 29, 1948, Black came through. The justice issued an order overturning the state judge's injunction and also put the brakes on a parallel investigation into vote fraud in Jim Wells County. LBJ was pronounced the winner of the primary by 87 votes and then went on to crush his Republican opponent in November.

True to form, Johnson never tried to conceal the role his corporate sponsors played in securing the 1948 election. Indeed, he bragged about his prowess at securing powerful and deep-pocketed backers, saying that his rise to the senate had been "Brown & Root funded."

Once again, it didn't take LBJ long to pay back his political investors with interest. In the spring of 1949, only months after claiming his senate seat, LBJ, the former New Dealer, launched an assault on Leland Olds, the chairman of the Federal Power Commission. Olds, a former muckraking reporter, was appointed by FDR to head the commission, which set power rates and regulated natural gas prices. His term expired in 1948, and Harry Truman had just announced his intention to reappoint him to the position, enraging the oil and gas industry. On Olds' advice, Truman had vetoed a bill that would have deregulated the natural gas industry.

In addition to Brown & Root, the Brown family also owned the Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation, then the nation's biggest natural gas pipeline company. The Browns were furious at Olds's rulings and pleaded with Johnson to defeat his renomination. LBJ did more than that. He destroyed the man in a set of hearings that would lay the groundwork for the show trials of the McCarthy era.

With the help of his pals Sam Rayburn and Richard Russell, Johnson, a freshman senator, got himself appointed chairman of the committee overseeing the Federal Power Commission. From this position, he launched into an onslaught on Olds, smearing the former supporter of Herbert Hoover as a "communist" who "travels with those who proposed the Marxian answer." LBJ, who only a few years earlier had used his political muscle to secure the vast public hydropower projects on the Little Colorado with the goal of providing cheap power to the citizens of the Hill Country, now accused Olds of "plotting a course toward confiscation and public ownership".

LBJ's ambush of Olds was scripted by none other than Brown & Root's lawyer, Alvin Wirtz. After this grilling, Olds was rejected by the senate on a vote of 53-15 and left the government a broken man. Johnson, however, flew back to Houston the night after his destruction of Olds on a private jet owned by Brown & Root. A company limousine met him at the airport and whisked away to the Brown & Root suite at the Lamar Hotel, where a victory party was in full swing featuring whiskey, women and the richest oil men in Texas – men who were primed to get a lot richer. CP

CounterPunch
PO Box 228
Petrolia, CA 95558

Phone 1-800-840-3683 for our new summer t-shirts, including the sensational "14 Per Cent" T, which can be viewed on our website.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED